In addition, the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette & Ethics) Regulations, 2002, complaints with regard to professional misconduct can be brought before the Medical Council of India or the concerned State Medical Council, as the the case may be, for disciplinary action. If found guilty, appropriate Medical Council may award such punishment as deemed necessary or may direct the removal altogether or for a specified period the name of the delinquent from the register of registered medical practitioners.

The National Health Policy, 2002 envisages the participation of the private sector in all areas of health activities—primary, secondary or tertiary.

According to the judgement dated 31st October, 2002 given by Supreme Court of India in the case of T.M.A. Pai Foundation & Others, v/s State of karnataka and others, the unaided private institutions have to adopt a rational fee structure and they are expected not to charge capitation fee or indulge in profiteering.

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has further laid down that private medical institutes have the freedom to fix their own fee structure. However, each State Government is required to set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of a retired High Court Judge to decide whether the fee proposed by the institute is justified and does not amount to profiteering or charging of capitation fee. The said Committee may approve the fee structure proposed by the Institute or may propose some other fee which shall be binding on the institute for a period of three years.

Junk food habit among the people

1164. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA:
SHRI DARA SINGH:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether government are aware that junk food is fast gaining popularity in metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Chandigarh and Delhi wherein people are getting quickly attracted towardsit;

(b) if so, whether the food experts the world over, have expressed their concern over increasing consumption of junk food as a large number of children and youth far failing victims;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to take concrete steps to check the expanding junk food culture in order to save our children from its adverse impact;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (e) There is no specific definition for junk food. The phrase 'Junk food' is used to denote such food which have high level of calories and have little enzyme producing vitamins and minerals. When such food is consumed, the body is required to produce its own enzymes to convert these empty calories into usable energy. This is not desireable as this enzymes producing function in human body should be reserved for the performance of vital metabolic reactions.

There is an increasing trend particularly among school children and adolescent population to consume 'Junk food' which is rich in calories but low in nutritive value. However, there is no large scale data on the extent of consumption of junk foods.

There is a concerned world over regarding consumption of highly refined foods with only energy and little or no vitamins and minerals.

There are studies to indicate that there is a positive correlation between consumption of foods with empty calories and chronic degenerative diseases as well as hypertension, obesity, cardio vascular problems and glucose intolerance. A study conducted by All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) - Department of Science & Technology (DST) in 2002 found that the consumption of junk food is increasing in schools and adolescent population. The same study has shown that this trend and associated life style factors in urban adolescent and young adult population has resulted in increase of non-communicable disease among the young population.

The need for education of general public to avoid junk food has increased and efforts are being made by Government, nutritionsts and dieticians to make people aware of its harmful effects. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has also prepared IEC material advising avoidance of junk food by all age groups of the population. These materials have been circulated to all the States and are also displayed and distributed during 'health melas' organized by this Ministry. The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) has developed dietary guidelines for Indians, where it has been suggested that ready to eat should be consumed judiciously and "free sugar" should be used sparingly.